

**Thomas Jefferson to John Breckinridge, February 18, 1800, with Copy, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.**

**TO JOHN BRECKENRIDGE J. MSS.**

Washington, Dec 18, 1800.

Dear Sir, —I received, while at home, the letter you were so kind as to write me. The employments of the country have such irresistible attractions for me, that while I am at home, I am very unpunctual in acknowledging the letters of my friends. Having no refuge here from my room & writing-table, it is my regular season for fetching up the lee-way of my correspondence. Before you receive this, you will have understood that the State of S Carolina (the only one about which there was uncertainty) has given a republican vote, and saved us from the consequences of the annihilation of Pennsylvania. But we are brought into dilemma by the probable equality of the two republican candidates. The federalists in Congress mean to take advantage of this, and either to prevent an election altogether, or reverse what has been understood to have been the wishes of the people, as to the President & Vice-president; wishes which the constitution did not permit them specially to designate. The latter alternative still gives us a republican administration. The former, a suspension of the federal government, for want of a head. This opens upon us an abyss, at which every sincere patriot must shudder. General Davie has arrived here with the treaty formed (under the name of a convention) with France. It is now before the Senate for ratification, and will encounter objections. He believes firmly that a continental peace in Europe will take place, and that England also may be comprehended.